

1 **Evaluation and Assessment of Priority Recommendations**
2 **Albemarle County Historic Preservation Committee**

3
4 **Priority Recommendation and Ordinance Evaluation Subcommittee**
5 **Approved by HPC, March 26, 2007**
6

7 On November 1 2000, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors voted to have the
8 Historic Preservation Committee develop a list of priorities for historic preservation "based
9 on incentives and voluntary measures." The HPC responded by developing a series of twelve
10 priority recommendations for historic preservation in Albemarle County (adopted in April
11 2001). The first priority recommendation, the creation a permanent Historic Preservation
12 Committee (HPC), was officially completed in January 2002 when the new HPC met for the
13 first time. At that initial meeting, the HPC created subcommittees to develop and pursue
14 various measures to achieve the goals of the remaining eleven priority recommendations.
15 Currently, the HPC has five subcommittees that include Database, Demolition, Heritage
16 Education / Community Events, Country Stores, and Financial Incentives. To date, the
17 HPC has accomplished the following in regard to the abovementioned priorities:

18
19 **Priority Recommendations**

- 20
21 **1. Create a permanent Historic Preservation Committee to provide**
22 **assistance and advice concerning the County's historic preservation**
23 **program.**
24

25 The HPC was formed by the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors in 2001.
26 Committee members are volunteers selected by the County Board of Supervisors
27 and represent a wide cross section of interests, including City and County residents,
28 realtors, developers, and historic property owners, to professionals working in fields
29 related to historic preservation including archaeology, architectural history, history,
30 historic preservation. The full HPC met for the first time on January 8, 2002. From
31 January 2002 to January 2007, Sara Lee Barnes served as the Chairperson of the
32 ACHPC. In 2003 Julie Mahon was hired as Historic Preservation Planner to provide
33 advice and assistance to the HPC. In January 2007, Jameson Gibson was elected
34 Chairperson, with Garth Anderson serving as Vice-Chair.
35

36 *Assessment:* Although the HPC was created and serves as a positively functioning
37 committee, it is the opinion of this subcommittee that Priority Recommendation #1
38 could be strengthened by creating a more formal structure or channel whereby the
39 HPC's 'assistance and advice' can be sought and offered on a regular basis. This may
40 mean the creation of a more efficient process where the Architectural Review Board,
41 Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors can query the HPC about Historic
42 Resource issues at a specific project level through the current Chair, and the County
43 can receive an efficient response.
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1 **2. Compile and maintain a current and comprehensive information base**
2 **for Albemarle Country's historic resources.**
3

4 The Database Subcommittee has designed the Historic Resource Database to be a
5 constantly growing and comprehensive information system that identifies, locates
6 and compiles information on a broad range of historic resources. The Historic
7 Resource Database will be compatible with the County's GIS System and will
8 identify resources by tax map parcel number. The Historic Preservation Planner,
9 Julie Mahon, began to assist the subcommittee in the planning and implementation
10 of the Historic Resource Database.
11

12 In 2004, Albemarle County chose *City View* as the program for tracking development
13 review. Because of limited interface capacity with *City View* and due to the inability
14 of available Albemarle County servers to handle the data requirements of the
15 proposed Historic Resource Database, in late 2004 the Database Subcommittee
16 decided to pursue the design of its own MS Access Database, to purchase its own
17 server, and to pursue County and outside funds to accomplish these tasks. In the
18 Spring of 2005 Julie Mahon enrolled in a course that allowed her to begin to build an
19 MS Access Database. At the conclusion of this course, it was realized that the
20 Database Subcommittee would need the assistance of a professional consultant to
21 carry the initial MS Access Database design to its desired completion.
22

23 *Assessment:* The subcommittee considers Priority Recommendation #2 incomplete
24 but ongoing. In 2006, the Department of Community Development submitted a
25 budget which included a \$60,000 request for consultant services to design the
26 Albemarle County Historic Resource Database and integrate it with City View.
27 Although the need for multi-year County funding is paramount, if the budget request
28 is not funded, the Database Committee will pursue the identification of and
29 application for private funding. The MS Access Database and its minimal interface
30 with *City View* is continuing to be designed by the Database Committee.
31

32 **3. Institute a program whereby new owners of historic properties are**
33 **notified of the significance of their property and are given**
34 **instructions for obtaining additional preservation-related information**
35 **concerning their historic resource.**
36

37 In order to raise public awareness of the significance of certain historic resources in
38 the County, an HPC subcommittee received approval from the BOS in Spring 2003
39 to send a letter to all new owners of historic properties informing them of the
40 cultural importance of their property. Currently subcommittee members periodically
41 reviews the local MLS sales listings to identify recipients of the letter and create a list
42 of purchasers of houses that are 50 or more years old. Subcommittee members then
43 review the list and make recommendations of recipients to County staff. The letter is
44 then prepared and signed by the HPC chair. The letters include County staff contact
45 information to assist in further researching their properties. The letters serve to
46 enlighten these new owners as to the importance of their new property as an integral
47 part of the history and overall appeal of Albemarle County. The letters also provide
48 an overview of the HPC and its work as well as contact information.

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Assessment: The subcommittee considers Priority Recommendation #3 complete but ongoing. A review of the program by staff indicates that they do not receive a significant number of responses or queries for information. In nearly four years there has only been one negative response while all others have been very positive. The HPC should periodically review the content of the letter for potential updates to garner more response.

4. Establish a formal definition of the term “significant historic resource” to be used in the implementation of the County’s Historic Preservation Plan.

Establishing a formal definition of “significant historic resource” was one of the first priorities tackled by the ACHPC. Its definition was discussed at several subcommittee and full committee meetings. On September 8, 2003 the full Committee adopted the following definition:

“Following the definition established by the National Register of Historic Places, a “historic resource” in Albemarle County is one with architecture, engineering, archaeological, or cultural remains present in districts, sites, buildings, or structures that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Each site should be associated with one or more of the following historical or cultural themes:

A: Those that are associated with the events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

B: Those that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past

C: Those that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values; or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction

D: Those that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history

Those themes that have been the most important to the broad patterns of Albemarle County’s history were discussed at length in a context study entitled, ‘From the Monacans to Monticello and Beyond: Prehistoric and Historic Contexts for Albemarle County, Virginia’ produced in May of 1995 by Garrow and Associates for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Historic resources in Albemarle County should be evaluated in light of—but are not limited to—these themes. Albemarle County’s historic resources are

1 not limited to those sites identified in this historic context study; they
 2 are intended only as examples. Furthermore, the historic or cultural
 3 contexts of Albemarle County's historic resources are not limited to
 4 any single dominant people group; they might be associated with
 5 Native Americans, enslaved and free blacks, and European settlers,
 6 including English, Scotch-Irish, and Germans, among others.
 7 Significant persons from Albemarle County's past can range from
 8 figures of international renown such as Thomas Jefferson, to persons
 9 of local significance, such as Civil Rights activist and educator Mary
 10 Carr Greer. When considering sites that "embody the distinctive
 11 characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that
 12 represent the work of a master," the relative rarity of the example
 13 should be a factor that warrants particular consideration. Rarity can
 14 be associated with, but not limited to: period, as in the Queen Anne
 15 style President's House for the Alberene Soapstone Company; type,
 16 as in the African-American Mont Alto schoolhouse; or method of
 17 construction, as in the timber frame and nogged dairy/smokehouse
 18 of Cloverfields Plantation. For further direction on interpreting the
 19 above criteria at the local level, see the National Register Criteria for
 20 Evaluation (Bulletin 15)."
 21

22 *Assessment:* The subcommittee considers Priority Recommendation #4 complete.
 23

24 **5. In the event the demolition of a significant historic resource must**
 25 **occur, thoroughly document the resource prior to demolition. Also**
 26 **encourage documentation prior to major adaptive reuse or renovation**
 27 **whenever possible.**
 28

29 The HPC has over the past five years endeavored to record threatened historic
 30 structures along a scale ranging from simple street-side photography to intensive
 31 photography of landscapes, exteriors, interiors, and details and the production of
 32 measured drawings--plans, elevations, sections, and details--generated to the
 33 standards of the Historic American Building Survey. While volunteers have
 34 sufficiently fulfilled the simpler recordation, teams of students from the University of
 35 Virginia under the direction of UVA faculty member and committee member Louis
 36 Nelson have completed the more intensive recording as part of preservation
 37 curriculum in the School of Architecture. Over the past five years, UVA students
 38 have recorded 1) a collection of the County's country stores, 2) the Cismont School,
 39 3) the Oakleigh Farm complex (now largely demolished for new development), and
 40 4) the agricultural buildings behind the now burned Wilton Farm. In each case, the
 41 students generated a complete set of drawings, a statement of significance, and a set
 42 of documentary photography that was submitted to the Library of Congress as part
 43 of the Historic American Building Survey collection. These efforts expand upon the
 44 consistent photography of historic properties 50 years or older by County staff,
 45 student interns, and members of the HPC.
 46

47 *Assessment:* The subcommittee considers Priority Recommendation #5 complete but
 48 ongoing. With the support from UVA, the HPC has recorded the most significant of

1 our threatened buildings, but such recording programs are dependent on the
 2 inconsistent course offerings of the School of Architecture and the availability of
 3 County staff and volunteers. If annual funds were received from the County, two
 4 part-time students could be hired whose work would be dedicated to recording
 5 threatened buildings. As a result many more threatened buildings could be recorded
 6 prior to their demolition.

7
 8 **6. Promote and encourage preservation by making available information**
 9 **regarding state and national register designation procedures, tax**
 10 **incentives, historic and conservation easements, and other voluntary**
 11 **preservation measures.**

12
 13 This subcommittee has assembled various pamphlets and brochures and compiled a
 14 list of web sites for distribution that provide information on voluntary preservation
 15 measures. The Historic Preservation Planner uses this information in responding to
 16 historic preservation inquiries. The Demolition and Heritage Education
 17 Subcommittees are currently working together to expand and update this material.
 18 The subcommittee has also drafted a "Guide to Identifying and Preserving Historic
 19 Properties and Sites" to provide information to local property owners on how to
 20 preserve, renovate, and /or restore historic properties as well as the various state and
 21 federal tax incentives for historic preservation. This guide is slated for completion in
 22 Spring 2007. The subcommittee also has completed a brochure for new owners of
 23 historic properties entitled: "Most Frequently asked Questions about Historic
 24 Properties," to send to interested parties. The brochure has not yet been printed.

25
 26 The HPC has also worked with the University of Virginia and University of Virginia
 27 Foundation to promote and encourage the preservation of historically significant
 28 properties held in the County including the Blue Ridge Hospital complex and the
 29 Sutherland farm.

30
 31 *Assessment:* The subcommittee considers Priority Recommendation #6 complete but
 32 ongoing. While many informational brochures and pamphlets are available, there is
 33 currently no successful means of widely distributing this information to the public. It
 34 is the recommendation of this subcommittee that obtaining County funding for
 35 printing hard copies and the posting of all brochures and pamphlets on a devoted
 36 HPC web page would satisfy this Priority Recommendation.

37
 38 **7. Foster community pride, good citizenship, and stewardship of the**
 39 **County's historic resources through heritage education programs,**
 40 **beginning with the creation of educational/information brochures on**
 41 **various County historic preservation issues, including state and**
 42 **national register listing, tax incentives, County policy, etc.**

43
 44 The Heritage Education and Community Event subcommittee has succeeded in
 45 organizing several educational programs that promote public awareness and
 46 appreciation of the County's historic resources and the various threats to their
 47 survival. In May, 2005, the subcommittee, with the support of other local
 48 preservation groups and the Albemarle County-Charlottesville Historical Society,
 49 arranged for Dr. Barbara Heath to present a paper on the commercial activities of

1 slaves and local white merchants in central Virginia in celebration of Historic
2 Preservation month. In addition, the HPC has initiated a partnership with the local
3 chapter of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities to begin
4 offering monthly symposiums on the care and maintenance of old homes. The HPC
5 is also planning to offer a course on tax incentives for owners of historic homes to
6 be taught by Committee members.

7
8 *Assessment:* The subcommittee considers Priority Recommendation #7 complete but
9 ongoing. The subcommittee also recommends that annual funding of the Heritage
10 Education and Community Events subcommittee would further the ability of the
11 HPC to attract speakers and coordinate and host heritage education programs.

12
13 **8. The Historic Preservation Committee should work with other**
14 **organizations to initiate and implement community events for**
15 **Albemarle County that recognize our historic resources. These events**
16 **should be coordinated with other statewide heritage tourism**
17 **activities and National Preservation Week.**

18
19 The Heritage Education and Community Event subcommittee has been extremely
20 successful in recognizing and raising awareness of Albemarle County's historic
21 resources. In 2004 the HPC partnered with the Charlottesville Area Association of
22 Realtors and *Real Estate Weekly* and published 'Barn Again' an article celebrating
23 historic barns and an agricultural heritage. In 2005, the subcommittee created a
24 Country Store exhibit that focused on their importance in local business and social
25 life. The exhibit was well-attended and displayed at several public locations following
26 the presentation. Photographs and research compiled by the HPC are being used to
27 create a permanent web site on Country Stores through the Historical Society.
28 Recently the Planning Commission adopted a resolution intent for a Country Stores
29 ZTA. A staff Country Stores ZTA Committee is now studying issues of tax
30 abatements in support for renovation of these historic resources. In May 2006, the
31 subcommittee spearheaded another public exhibit and presentation on the history of
32 Rosenwald schools in Albemarle County. The program, which included papers
33 presented by Craig Burton, Scott French, and Jackie Taylor, focused on the
34 importance of these schools for the education of rural African-Americans during
35 segregation. The program also included historic photographs and a windshield
36 survey of the schools in Albemarle County compiled by members of the
37 subcommittee.

38
39 *Assessment:* The subcommittee considers Priority Recommendation #8 complete but
40 ongoing. The HPC is now one of several organizations attending regular
41 Charlottesville Albemarle Preservation Alliance (CAPA) meetings, a regional
42 organization of preservation minded public and private entities devoted to
43 promoting preservation education and values. The subcommittee also recommends
44 that appropriation of annual funds for the HPC would further the ability of the
45 Heritage Education and Community Events subcommittee to attract speakers and
46 coordinate and host programs that focus on our County's diverse and significant
47 historic resources.

48

1 **9. To help protect the Monticello viewshed, adopt a more formalized**
2 **procedure that begins early in the planning process to encourage**
3 **cooperation between the Thomas Jefferson Foundation and**
4 **developers of property within the viewshed.**
5

6 This recommendation, regarding the Monticello viewshed, was addressed by the
7 Database subcommittee and full HPC in the Spring of 2004. The Committee
8 questioned the equity of singling out one viewshed and discussed the possibility of
9 expanding the work item to include consideration of additional significant historic
10 viewsheds throughout the County. On April 26, 2004, the Committee voted to
11 recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the wording of Priority
12 Recommendation #9 be revised as follows:
13

14 ***Proposed language:*** Identify significant publicly accessible viewsheds in the County
15 associated with a historic resource or a theme central to the history of the County.
16 Develop recommendations on the treatment of those viewsheds.
17

18 The Committee believes that this change is important because the Monticello
19 viewshed is only one of the significant viewsheds in the County. While Monticello is
20 a unique resource, its significance does not diminish the importance of other
21 viewsheds. Such viewsheds contribute greatly to the existing character of the County.
22 They are a significant contributing factor to the high quality of life that County
23 residents enjoy, and they are a notable component of our economy as tourist
24 attractions. Furthermore, the Committee has acknowledged that since the Historic
25 Preservation Plan was adopted, the County's development departments have
26 consistently been notifying developers when their projects fall within the Monticello
27 viewshed and recommending that the developers contact Monticello directly to
28 discuss the potential impacts of their proposals. Consequently, the Committee plans
29 no further specific measures to address the Monticello viewshed.
30

31 The 2005 Resolution of Intent adopted by the BOS to amend the Historic
32 Preservation Plan and the Comprehensive plan included this change to the
33 Monticello Viewshed recommendation.
34

35 *Assessment:* The subcommittee considers Priority Recommendation #9 incomplete.
36 No additional work on this Priority recommendation has occurred since the approval
37 of this resolution by the BOS in late 2005.
38

39 **10. Be prepared to take advantage of resources, as they become**
40 **available, to assist in the implementation of the County's historic**
41 **preservation plan.**
42

43 The HPC is prepared to take advantage of resources, such as public monies, private
44 grants and educational sessions, as they are made available. The HPC also makes
45 recommendations to the County on historic resource funding when committee input
46 is requested. Individual committee members are aware of state-level resources such
47 as the Department of Historic Resources Cost-Share program and other public
48 programs and provide professional advice to the Historic Preservation Planner when

1 requested. In the past, Albemarle County has taken advantage of DHR Cost-Share
2 funds to carry out an update of a survey of 70 historic resources in the Woolen Mills
3 vicinity and Places 29 project area. In addition, a DHR Cost-Share survey will be
4 initiated this year on surveying approximately 270 properties in downtown Crozet
5 that will inform development strategies and integrate them with preservation goals.

6
7 *Assessment:* The subcommittee considers Priority Recommendation #10 complete but
8 ongoing.

9
10 **11. Continue to pursue the implementation of financial incentives for**
11 **historic preservation, including the establishment of a revolving loan**
12 **fund and the requisite enabling legislation.**

13
14 In 2003, Sally Thomas of the Board of Supervisors, brought a proposal before the
15 State Legislature seeking enabling legislation to establish a revolving loan fund to
16 provide financial aid and incentives for renovation and restoration of historic
17 properties in Albemarle County. The proposal was defeated by the bankers' lobby,
18 which argued that such a program was appropriately handled by a regulated bank and
19 not a County government. In late 2003, the Financial Incentives Committee
20 attempted to negotiate a compromise with the bankers' lobby. This attempt failed. In
21 December of 2004, the subcommittee recommended that the County should fund a
22 grant program for historic preservation projects, but this proposal failed to gain
23 approval from the full HPC. In 2005, the subcommittee recommended that a fund
24 be established at the Charlottesville Albemarle Community Foundation, started by
25 seed money from the County and relying on private funding, to support historic
26 preservation. This proposal failed to gain approval from the full HPC.

27
28 *Assessment:* The subcommittee considers Priority Recommendation #11 as complete
29 but ongoing.

30
31 **12. Two years after the adoption of these recommendations, evaluate the**
32 **County's progress on these preservation priorities, and evaluate the**
33 **need for a historic overlay ordinance.**

34
35 Six years after adopting these recommendations, in November of 2006 the Priority
36 Recommendation and Ordinance Evaluation subcommittee of the HPC was formed
37 to evaluate the HPC's and, by extension, the County's progress with the Priority
38 Recommendations. This subcommittee prepared this document and it serves as a
39 preliminary assessment of our progress.

40
41 The Priority Recommendation and Ordinance Evaluation subcommittee intends to
42 evaluate the need for an historic overlay ordinance in its upcoming meetings in
43 March and April of 2007. Recommendations extending from these meetings will be
44 presented to the HPC and opened for discussion. [*Staff note: This discussion has not*
45 *taken place as of mid-May 2007.*]
46

1 **Priority Recommendation and Ordinance Evaluation Subcommittee**
2 **General Recommendations**

3
4 After evaluating the Priority Recommendations, the Priority Recommendation and
5 Ordinance Evaluation subcommittee felt strongly that the following
6 recommendations be made to the HPC.

- 7
8 1. This subcommittee recommends that the HPC adopt this document, with
9 any associated revisions, at its full March 2007 meeting.
- 10
11 2. This subcommittee recommends that the HPC continue to fill vacated
12 appointments that will allow the committee to operate at an acceptable
13 level.
- 14
15 3. This subcommittee recommends that the HPC immediately request that
16 the existing web page on Albemarle County's site (www.albemarle.org)
17 be improved to include expanded information about the HPC, its
18 subcommittees, its work and accomplishments. In addition to furthering
19 the cause of Historic Preservation in Albemarle County, an HPC web page
20 would enhance the ability of several subcommittees to carry out the
21 dissemination of important information, including brochures, pamphlets,
22 and links to other preservation related websites
- 23
24 4. This subcommittee recommends that the HPC initiate an annual line item
25 request for funds, above and beyond the current budget request, that will
26 meet the various subcommittee needs in carrying out the Priority
27 Recommendations. While it is acknowledged that funds are sometimes
28 available from Albemarle County for small requests, an annual budget
29 with a known amount of money will allow the HPC to more effectively
30 plan and carry out the realization of proposed projects and the overall
31 success of subcommittees.